

Some observations on the building of a new international order

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The basis of a new international order

Today the world is highly diversified and will continue to be so in the future. The planet holds more than a hundred independent sovereign states that differ greatly in their historical and cultural traditions, social systems, ideologies and values, and economic development.

Nations confronted with diverse problems and circumstances often do not share immediate and long-term interests. History tells us that the old international order characterized by power politics and hegemony undermined world stability, security and development, bringing serious consequences. What kind of new world order should we therefore establish?

Major elements of the new international order

A new political order is closely related to a new economic order. The following principles should therefore be adhered to:

- It is imperative to oppose hegemony, power politics of all descriptions, and the manipulation of international affairs by a few

large powers. All countries, large or small, must be treated as equal and thereby entitled to discuss and make decisions on major international issues.

- People of all countries have the right to choose their own social, economic, and political systems as well as their path to development, according to their historical and cultural traditions and current national conditions.
- Countries should seek common ground and work for mutual benefits while reserving differences of opinion and respecting differing popular beliefs and customs. No country is allowed to impose its own will and values upon another.
- Disputes between states—bilateral, regional or multilateral—should be settled through peaceful consultation, not by force, or threat of force. The international community must condemn military aggression committed by any state in clear-cut terms and take any action necessary to halt it.
- Efforts should be made against the arms race and the proliferation of all kinds of destructive weapons including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Sales of all types of sophisticated conventional weapons should be restricted, all military blocs disbanded and all countries should be prevented from

establishing military bases and deploying military forces abroad.

The Declaration and the Program of Action concerning the Establishment of a New International Economic Order adopted at the Sixth Special Session of UNGA in 1974 reflects the aspirations of developing countries to forge new international economic relationships characterized by fairness and mutually beneficial cooperation for common development and prosperity. Under current circumstances, it is even more necessary and urgent to set up a new international economic order, based on the following:

- Efforts should be made to change the disadvantageous position of developing countries in international trade and improve trade terms.
- It is necessary to increase capital flows into developing countries, liberalize international credit terms and reform existing international monetary and financial systems in order to allow developing countries a bigger say in those selfsame monetary institutions.
- It is important to reform the world economic structure, and speed up industrialization in developing countries so as to enhance their capacity to stand on their own feet.
- Developing countries have the right to choose their own paths to development, their modalities and

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strategies according to national conditions. No country, or international organization, has the right to restrict or interfere with the exercise of such rights. In recent years, certain developed countries have tended to use official aid for development as a means to interfere in the internal affairs of recipient developing countries and force them to adopt Western political and economic systems. Such a tendency is very harmful to normal state-to-state relations.

World economy is an integral whole with interdependent national and regional economies. The widening gap between North and South, as developing countries become poorer and more backward, not only constitutes a grave threat to the subsistence and development of the latter, but makes it hard for developed countries to ensure their own sustained growth and prosperity. To facilitate common economic growth, developed countries have a great responsibility to help developing countries overcome their difficulties.

The role of the United Nations

In its early years, the United Nations contributed a great deal in opposing racial discrimination and oppression, while supporting national independence and liberation movements.

Recently the UN has played a major role in facilitating the peaceful resolution of regional disputes. It has also made remarkable achievements in issues of disarmament, North-South dialogue, population activities, environmental protection and drug control.

Since the late 1980s, when bipolar world structure was disintegrating and moving towards multipolarization, there has been a realignment in the global balance of power. The decline and disintegration of a superpower is coupled with the relatively reduced

ability of the other superpower to manipulate world affairs.

Now, even a few big powers have stated their willingness to see the UN playing a "central role" in building a new world order. The question is whether these countries will place themselves on an equal footing with other member states, discharge their responsibilities seriously, and respect the rights and interests of other countries, or put themselves above the UN and attempt to dominate the new world order. This poses a great challenge to both the UN and those particular world powers.

The present complex and volatile international situation brings the UN new opportunities while increasing its responsibilities. People the world over hope that the UN, in seeking consensus while maintaining differences of opinion, will continue to work for political solutions to regional conflicts and play a more significant role in the establishment of a fair and reasonable new international order. So long as every member state is treated equally and the aspirations and interests of all nations respected, the UN can surely play a more important role in this diversified world.

International arms control and disarmament

Due to a general relaxation of international tensions and the evolution of US-Soviet relations, considerable progress has been made in the field of disarmament in the past few years.

At present, the international community is very much concerned about the control, or decontrol, of thousands of nuclear weapons located in the former Soviet Union republics. There is also concern over the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the world's conflict-ridden areas.

Prospects of arms control and disarmament have a direct bearing on peace and security in the world and

are therefore essential to the establishment of a peaceful new international order. In my view, much remains to be done, building on past triumphs, to achieve the following objectives:

- The United States and Russia (or the new Commonwealth) should implement the nuclear reduction treaties signed so far. They must continue to make major cuts in their nuclear arsenals, which still account for 90% of the world's total, even after the prescribed reduction, and end the qualitative arms race between them, to create conditions for the convening of a broadly representative international conference on nuclear disarmament.
- Military capabilities should be used only for the purpose of self-defense and no country should seek an armament level in excess of reasonable needs. The international community should therefore, through extensive consultations on an equal basis, formulate fair, reasonable and effective measures to control arms sales, including those of various sophisticated weapons.
- It is necessary to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regulations and call upon all states to undertake a commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. The National People's Congress has just approved the decision of the Chinese Government to accede to the NPT.
- Conditions are ripe for all nuclear powers to declare non-first-use of nuclear weapons and assumed commitment not to use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear powers and nuclear-weapons-free zones.
- Efforts must be made to accelerate negotiations on chemical weapons at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva for an early conclusion to a global convention on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all chemical weapons.

Population explosion

World population reached 5.0 billion in 1987, double that of 37 years before, and is estimated at more than 10 billion by the year 2050. Rapid population growth in the developing world is of deeper concern. Total population in developing countries increased from 1.7 billion in 1950 to 4.0 billion in 1990 and is expected to be 6.8 billion by the year 2025.

As a consequence, excessive population increases have caused many serious problems not only to developing countries, but to the world at large. Some of the current and projected grave consequences are the following:

- The slowing down of economic growth, a drop in per capita GNP and increased unemployment.
- Large numbers of rural people swarming to the cities. Between 1960 and 1980 those with an average population of 500,000 and more had increased from 110 to 278, overburdening the urban economy and causing enormous problems and difficulties in housing, medical care, education, public transport, etc. This was accompanied by growing crime rates and other ensuing destabilizing factors.

\$370 per capita average annual income was 1,116 million, about one-third of the area's total population.

Obviously, the population explosion is not just a serious issue for individual developing countries, but a global problem. Nor is it just a socioeconomic problem, since it can also affect international stability. In the building of a new world order demographic issues are a priority.

The population problem is nevertheless closely related to a country's level of socioeconomic development. The solution calls for tremendous effort and comprehensive measures by that country, in addition to international cooperation, especially from developed countries.

The fundamental way to remove the crisis of overpopulation in the developing world is to speed up socioeconomic development. Developed countries with farsightedness should adopt such a fundamental approach to create a sound environment for development.

The most pressing current population issue is to curb excessive demographic increases. It is therefore imperative for the international community to:

- Call on developed countries to be more generous in providing funds and technology. International assistance is extremely important despite the fact that the formulation and implementation of population policies is an internal affair.
- Strengthen international cooperation, and especially cooperation with developed countries, to back research into more effective, convenient and reliable contraceptive technologies.
- Entrust relevant international organizations to sponsor scientific and technological research on population problems and facilitate the non-commercial transfer of advanced and applicable technologies to needy states.

Ideologies and values

Many people in the West conclude that given the drastic changes in Eastern Europe and the collapse and dismemberment of the former Soviet Union, the new world order must be based on Western values which should prevail worldwide. These include such concepts as "democracy", "human rights", "private ownership and market economy", "free election", "multiparty systems", etc.

In a world of great diversity there exist varied ideologies and values. Which of these is adopted is determined by numerous factors: social, historical, economic, political and cultural. Even in one country, people's values may differ greatly due to disparities in social status and levels of education. The difference is even greater between different countries and peoples. Compulsory unification of different ideologies and values is simply impossible.

Historical evidence shows that normal state-to-state relations should not be determined by commonalty or disparity in these areas. The

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- Exhaustion of resources and deterioration of the natural environment, deforestation and overgrazing, resulting in a reduction of arable land and serious pollution.
- Poverty and a widening gap between North and South. In 1985 the number of poor in the developing world with less than US
- Continue to appeal to governments and the public with a view to making them aware of the urgency of the matter and their common responsibility. This should be directed towards not just government leaders and parliamentarians but people from all walks of life, including religious and community leaders.

imposition of Western values as the basis of a new world order would only create a new world disorder.

The concept of human rights has now been fragmented and double standards followed. Attempts have been made to glorify personal preferences at the expense of the opinions of others. The former have been set up as criteria of human rights while those basic principles stipulated in many international conventions, declarations and legal instruments, and the actual conditions of other countries, have been disregarded.

In essence, human rights are under domestic jurisdiction. Therefore human rights issues should be handled by sovereign states themselves without external interference, except for acts of gross violations of human rights such as apartheid, racial discrimination, foreign aggression and occupation.

In the latter cases, direct intervention by the international community is permissible under the provisions of the Charter of the UN, international law and international human rights documents. With regard to human rights, a new international order should promote international protection and cooperation based on respect for state sovereignty, while forbidding abuse of, and interference in, other countries' internal affairs.

Nowadays human rights often refer only to individual civil and political rights in the West. As a matter of fact, according to international legal instruments on human rights, these include the right to national self-determination, to subsistence, development and other economic, social, and cultural rights.

Equal importance should be attached to all such rights. One must not emphasize some while belittling or even denying others. As far as developing countries are concerned, the most fundamental human right is the right to subsistence and development.

Regional stability vs. a new international order

To resolve regional conflicts for regional stability is of vital importance to the establishment of a new international order. Conflicts and local wars continued over long periods against the backdrop of US-Soviet rivalry throughout the world,

through mutual understanding, accommodation, and friendly cooperation.

Those external countries concerned, and the great powers in particular, should refrain from meddling in intra-regional affairs for their own interests or from playing one country off against another.

“A new political order is closely related to a new economic order”

thus seriously undermining regional and international security. The world is not yet tranquil. Emerging imbalances of power in the international arena have led to the outbreak of new conflicts and disturbances. Interwoven conflicts over territorial, nationality and religious issues, access to resources, etc., previously hidden in the context of the US-Soviet contention, are now surfacing.

The Gulf War, the civil war in Yugoslavia and the unrest in East European countries and former Soviet republics are cases in point. The situation in the Asian and Pacific region is relatively stable. The region continues to lead the world in economic growth with intensified regional and sub-regional economic cooperation. On the political scene, the last year has shown some encouraging developments—an all-round political settlement of the Cambodian question, followed by the recent breakthrough in North and South Korean relations.

Building a new world order on a regional basis is no easy undertaking, each area has its own problems and contradictions. Countries in a given region should play a primary role. It is essential for them to iron out differences and resolve conflicts

Rather, they should do everything possible to facilitate good neighborly relations between regional states.

In short, a new stable regional order is an integral part of a new peaceful world order.

In conclusion, I would like to say a word or two about China. After three years of economic readjustment, China has succeeded in achieving steady economic growth and sociopolitical stability. The Chinese Government has been making steadfast efforts to reshape the country into a modern socialist state with unique characteristics. It has unswervingly persisted in an open policy aimed at reform, and followed an independent foreign policy for peace, good neighborliness, mutual benefit and cooperation. China needs a stable and peaceful international environment for national reconstruction while the world needs a stable and developing China for peace in Asia and the world. As a developing country with a population of 1.1 billion and as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, China will continue to cooperate with the world community in the building of a peaceful and equitable new international order that will ensure prosperity for all mankind **M**